

Amendments to the Claims:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended) A plant for continuous packing of food products in modified atmosphere, comprising a machine for continuous packing in a modified atmosphere of the food products and a conveyor for continuous sequential feeding of the food products to the machine, wherein before an entrance of the machine, along a transport section of the conveyor near the entrance of the machine, means are present that temporarily submit the food products continuously fed by the conveyor to vacuum before the food products are packed in modified atmosphere in the machine, wherein a suitable inert gas constitutes the modified atmosphere, characterized in that said means comprise at least a bell connected to means for the suction of air from inside the bell, the bell being supported by movement means for the bell's its-synchronous movement along the transport section of the conveyor near the entrance of the machine to enclose in said section one of the food products under the bell and submit said one of the food products to said vacuum; and characterized in that, on the transport section of the conveyor, the food products, after being subject to vacuum in the bell, are subject to normal atmosphere before the food products are packed in the modified atmosphere in the machine.

Claim 2 (cancelled)

Claim 3 (previously presented) The plant according to claim 1, characterized in that the movement means comprise a carousel transporting the bell along a closed section that comprises said transport section of the conveyor and means of controlled lowering of the

bell onto the conveyor.

Claim 4 (currently amended) The plant according to claim ~~3~~¹, characterized in that the controlled lowering means comprise a support of the bell that can be vertically lowered against the action of the elastic means keeping the bell in a raised position and actuator means positioned along said transport section to push the bell towards the conveyor against the action of said elastic means.

Claim 5 (previously presented) The plant according to claim 4, characterized in that the actuator means comprise a lowering cam yoke of said support of the bell.

Claim 6 (previously presented) The plant according to claim 1, characterized in that it comprises a plurality of bells to act simultaneously on several products moved sequentially along said transport section.

Claim 7 (currently amended) The plant according to claim ~~3~~¹, characterized in that the suction and input means are supported by the carousel to be moved together with the bell.

Claim 8 (previously presented) The plant according to claim 1, characterized in that the continuous packing machine in modified atmosphere is the type comprising a roll of plastic film and means that unroll, conform into a tube and weld the film to create packs sequentially around products fed to it.

Claim 9 (currently amended) A device for temporarily submitting in sequence food products that flow sequentially on a continuous conveyor to vacuum and to a modified atmosphere, wherein a suitable inert gas constitutes the modified atmosphere, said device comprising at least a bell connected to means for the suction of air from

inside the bell and means for the input of modified atmosphere into the bell, the bell being supported by movement means for the bell's ~~its~~ synchronous movement along a transport section of the conveyor to enclose one of the food products under it in said section and submit said one of the food products to said vacuum and to said modified atmosphere, and characterized in that, on the transport section of the conveyor, the food products, after being subject to vacuum in the bell, are subject to normal atmosphere before the food products are packed in the modified atmosphere.

Claim 10 (previously presented) The device according to claim 9, characterized in that the movement means comprise a carousel for transporting the bell along a closed section that comprises said transport section of the conveyor and means for controlled lowering of the bell onto the conveyor.

Claim 11 (previously presented) The device according to claim 9, characterized in that the controlled lowering means comprise a support of the bell that can be lowered vertically against the action of the elastic means for keeping the bell in a raised position and actuator means placed along said transport section to push the bell towards the conveyor against the action of said elastic means.

Claim 12 (previously presented) The device according to claim 11, characterized in that the actuator means comprise a cam yoke for lowering said support of the bell.

Claim 13 (previously presented) The device according to claim 9, characterized in that it comprises a plurality of bells to act simultaneously on several products moved sequentially along said transport section.

Claim 14 (previously presented) The device according to claim 10, characterized in that the suction and input means are supported by the carousel to be moved together with

the bell.

Claim 15 (previously presented) The device according to claim 14, characterized in that the suction and input means comprise a pump for each bell.

Claim 16 (previously presented) The device according to claim 9, characterized in that it comprises counter-bells connected to means for suction of air from inside them and which are mobile, to be positioned in front of the bells and in contact with the other face of the transport surface of the conveyor, in the sense that vacuum is created that balances the action of vacuum of the bells on the conveyor.

Claim 17 (currently amended) A plant for continuous packing of food products in modified atmosphere, comprising a machine for continuous packing in a modified atmosphere of the food products and a conveyor for continuous sequential feeding of the food products to the machine, wherein before an entrance of the machine, along a transport section of the conveyor near the entrance of the machine, means are present that temporarily submit the food products continuously fed by the conveyor sequentially to vacuum and a modified atmosphere before the food products are packed in modified atmosphere in the machine, wherein a suitable inert gas constitutes the modified atmosphere, characterized in that said means comprise at least a bell connected to means for the suction of air from inside the bell and for the input of modified atmosphere, the bell being supported by movement means for the bell's ~~its~~-synchronous movement along the transport section of the conveyor near the entrance of the machine to enclose in said section one of the food products under the bell and submit said one of the food products to said vacuum and to said modified atmosphere, and characterized in that, on the transport section of the conveyor, the food products, after being subject to vacuum and modified atmosphere in the bell, are subject to normal atmosphere before the food products are packed in the modified atmosphere in the machine.